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The Pocket Sandwich and Piroshki Recipe Guide



Easy-to-Make Hot Sandwiches

Recipes and Techniques

A Prepared Pantry Publication

There's magic in those little sandwiches!

Stuffing meat or cheeses or other goodies inside a pocket of dough and baking it is not new. Nearly every culture has some version. There must be something universally appealing about the concept.

We've come a long way. We started out wrapping dough around a hot dog. Then we tried other fillings, first in bread dough and then in biscuit dough. Somewhere along the line, we started making calzones. Then we discovered piroshki—a traditional Russian version. And we're still evolving.

We would like to share our enthusiasm for stuffed sandwiches, especially piroshki, in this guide. You'll see where we've been and learn how to make them yourself. You'll find some of our favorite recipes falling into three categories:



- 1. Basic pocket sandwiches made with dough**
- 2. Piroshki**
- 3. Calzones**

You'll find pocket sandwiches are open to experimentation. Add different fillings and try different styles of pockets.

We hope you enjoy the journey.

Dennis & Merri Ann Weaver & Company

The Pocket Sandwich and Piroshki Recipe Guide

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Pockets and Piroshki

We've been making pocket sandwiches, starting with our own creations or creations we've seen our mothers make, for over 20 years. They probably started with bread dough wrapped around a hot dog smeared with mustard. We certainly decided that this was a vast improvement over a hot dog in a commercial bun. (A good brat is an improvement yet.)



Along the way, we experimented. Adding cheese was probably the next step but we can remember trying bacon and scrambled eggs. We didn't have much luck with the eggs. Enveloping cooked eggs in dough and then baking them overcooked the eggs resulting in dry sandwiches with green eggs. (Dr. Seuss would be proud.) Later, we tried everything from chocolate chips (chocolate chips, sour cream, and sugar) to sun-dried tomatoes (sun-dried tomatoes, olives or onions, and basil).

When we were back in Alaska--we discovered piroshki. We made them over and over again, experimenting with different fillings. Often they had a sauce mixed in, a white sauce or brown like a gravy. We loved them. But when we moved on to Minnesota we lost the recipe. When we found this nifty little dough press and fell in love with piroshki again. (We now sell the press on our web site.)

This publication is about hot, pocket sandwiches. It's divided into three parts:

- 1. Basic pocket sandwiches made in dough**
- 2. Piroshki**
- 3. Calzones**

You'll find pocket sandwiches are open to experimentation and adaptation so use these recipes as templates for your own style of pocket sandwiches.

Basic Pocket Sandwiches in Yeast Bread

Pockets sandwiches are simple to make and simple in concept. You simply put the sandwich fixings into the bun before you bake it. Here we'll show you different ways to stuff meats and cheeses into bread. Picture to the right, is a pocket with a brat, cheddar cheese, and mustard and one with ham and cheese.



Here's how to make them.

1. Mix the bread according to the recipe or package instructions. You can save time and concoct some interesting combinations with bread mixes but any mix or recipe will do. If you are using your bread machine, set the machine for “dough” so that it will rise but not bake.
2. After the dough has risen, divide it into bun-sized pieces—eight pieces for a bread machine mix or sixteen for a double loaf mix is about right.
3. Roll each piece flat with a rolling pin. Place the meat, cheese, and condiments in the center of the bread pieces. Pull the dough around the filling, pinching the seams closed. The dough will tend to pull apart on the seams as it rises again so pinch the seams tightly together making sure that they are bound and sealed well. Place the buns seam side down on a greased baking sheet. Let the dough rise until puffy and doubled. It will take longer to rise than dough alone because of the cool filling in the dough.
4. Bake for eighteen minutes or until the bread is done. Serve hot. Refrigerate leftovers.

These are great for picnics and box lunches. Because they are made with bread dough, they will last longer than the pocket sandwiches that follow, made with biscuit dough. Because they have fillings that may spoil, protect them as you would any other meat or cheese sandwich.

Basic Pocket Sandwiches in Biscuits

You can make quick hot pocket sandwiches with baking powder biscuit dough just as you do with bread dough. Fill your pockets with whatever you want, any cheese and meat combination. Add mustard, jalapenos, or onions if you like. Because these are made with biscuit dough instead of bread dough and you don't have to wait for the bread to rise, they are quick to make.

Here is a recipe for biscuits with which to make hot sandwiches.

Ingredients

2 cups all purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 tablespoon sugar
1/2 teaspoons salt
1/4 pound (one stick) cold butter
2/3 cup buttermilk

Directions

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Oil a baking sheet.

1. Measure the flour by scooping some into a bowl and then spooning the flour into the measuring cup. (If you measure packed flour, you will have too much.)
2. Add the baking powder, baking soda, sugar, and salt and stir these ingredients into the flour. Slice the cold butter into the flour mixture. Use a pastry knife or two kitchen knives to cut the butter into the flour mixture. Work the butter into the flour mixture until you have a coarse, grainy mixture.
3. Make a well in the middle of the flour and pour the buttermilk into the flour mixture. Stir until just moistened and knead a few times to make a smooth dough.
4. Roll the dough to a thickness of 3/8-inch. Use a large drinking glass or small bowl to cut circles four inches in diameter. Spread mayonnaise or mustard on one and pile meats, cheeses, or other fillings in the center. Lay another circle over the top. Holding the two circles in your hand, pinch the edges tightly together clamshell fashion. Through the open side, stuff additional fillings into the pocket and then continue pinching the edges together. Place the pocket on the prepared sheet and press the pocket into a flat disc (about 3/4-inch thick) with the heel of your hand.



5. Bake for 12 to 14 minutes or until the pockets begin to brown. Remove the pockets from the baking sheet and place them on a wire rack. Serve hot.

How to Make Piroshki

See the video!

Go to: <http://www.preparedpantry.com/How-to-Make-Piroshki.htm>

Piroshki are Russian-style pocket sandwiches. They can be filled with a variety of foods and are great for snacks, lunches, and appetizers. They are easy to make with a dough press such as what you would use for turnovers, calzones, and dumplings.

You can make piroshki without a dough press but a dough press makes it easier to add the filling and seal the edges so that they do not leak. The dough press has a concave area and when you place the dough in the press, the concave area creates a cup in the dough in which to place your filling. The leverage of the dough press presses the two edges of the dough together tightly for a secure seal.



Here's how to make piroshki:

1. **Make the Dough:** Piroshki can be made with either a baking powder or yeast dough. The baking powder dough that we use is egg rich and good enough to rival yeast doughs.
2. **Cook the Filling:** The filling can be made with meat and cheese or vegetables. Let your imagination be your guide.
3. **Assemble and Bake:** Roll the dough, cut into 6-inch circles, add filling, fold the dough over and seal the edges, and bake. You can use a bowl or a six-inch pan lid to cut the dough circles.

They are very simple to make. As we experimented with different fillings and recipes, we learned some lessons:

- Cheese will leak out if the dough is not carefully sealed. Dampen the edges of the circle with a pastry brush and water before sealing. (We don't find that necessary with the other recipes.) Reduce the baking time by five minutes.
- The dough will absorb some liquid from the filling. Add an extra half-cup of water to the filling for moister piroshki.

- New, waxy potatoes work well in piroshki. Russet potatoes are too starchy to match up with the starch in the crust.

What You'll Need

A dough press makes it both easier to fill and to seal your piroshki. A rolling pin is essential to roll your dough to a uniform thickness. If use a dough made with baking powder rather than yeast, you will need a pastry knife. Here are the tools that we recommend:

Large Dough Press TN1041

You can make piroshki without a dough press but a dough press makes it easier to add the filling and seal the edges so that they do not leak. The dough press has a concave area and when you place the dough in the press, the concave area creates a cup in the dough in which to place your filling. The leverage of the dough press presses the two edges of the dough together tightly for a secure seal.



Deluxe Marble Rolling Pin with Hardwood Base TN3087

This is our most popular rolling pin. With butter-based doughs, it is absolutely essential that you keep the dough cool enough that the butter does not melt. Marble is naturally cool. Especially if you chill your rolling pin in the freezer, this rolling pin will protect your butter from melting.



A heavy rolling pin requires less downward pressure to roll out your dough.

Deluxe Stainless Steel Rolling Pin TN3076

This is a beast! We think it is our best rolling pin. It's heavy and holds its chill for a long time. This is a really classy looking rolling pin and, like all of our rolling pins, it turns on bearings.



Deluxe Non-Stick Rolling Pin TN3088

This is a very nice rolling pin. With a nonstick surface, dough will not cling to the pin as you roll.

This pin will not hold the chill as well as marble and steel but if you are chilling your dough and working quickly, this pin will be a joy to use.



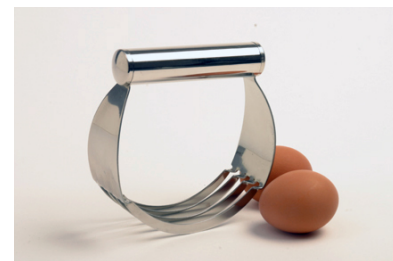
Professional Stainless Steel Pastry Blender or Knife with Sure-Grip Handle TN3245

Unless you are using a yeast-based recipe, you will need a pastry knife to cut the butter into the flour. This is a good, solid, pastry knife at a good price. We really like the sure-grip feature.



Professional Stainless Steel Pastry Blender or Knife TN3247

This is the biggest, toughest, pastry knife that we found. It's classy, it won't bend, and it will last a lifetime. If you do a lot of baking, this is the pastry knife to invest in.



About these Piroshki Recipes

In the piroshki recipes that follow, you will find some with baking powder dough and some with yeasted dough. These recipes lend themselves to mixing and matching. Since they yield approximately the same, you can match any filling to a baking powder recipe or to a yeast recipe.

Beef and Onion Piroshki

This is a classic piroshki recipe. You make these in three steps: make the dough, cook the filling, and then assemble the piroshki. It's easiest to do with a dough press but you can build it manually. If so, be sure to seal the edges well with the tines of a fork.

For the dough

3 1/2 cups flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon granulated sugar
1/2 cup cold butter
2 large eggs
1 cup sour cream

1. Sift the flour, baking powder, salt, and sugar into a bowl. Cut the butter into 1/2-inch cubes and add it to the flour. Cut the butter into the flour with a pastry knife until it is the consistency of oatmeal.
2. In another bowl, whisk the eggs and sour cream together until it is smooth.
3. Add the egg mixture to the flour mixture and stir into a mass. Remove the dough ball to a floured counter and knead for a few minutes to make a smooth dough. Cover the dough ball and chill it in the refrigerator for an hour.



For the filling

1 pound ground beef
1 large onion, finely chopped
1 tablespoon flour
1/2 cup water or broth
3 tablespoons sour cream

2 hard-boiled eggs, chopped
3 tablespoons fresh dill, chopped
salt
black pepper
1 egg, lightly beaten, for glazing

1. Brown the meat in a skillet. Add the onion and sauté for ten minutes or until the meat and onion are cooked.
2. Sprinkle flour over the meat mixture and continue cooking for one more minute to gelatinize the flour. Add the water to create an in-the-pan sauce.
3. Add the sour cream, stir to blend, and then remove from the heat. Add the chopped eggs, dill, and salt and pepper to taste. Set aside.

To assemble and bake the piroshki

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

1. Divide the dough in half and return one half to the refrigerator to keep it cold. Roll the dough out on a floured counter to a thickness of 1/4-inch. Cut the dough into twelve 6-inch rounds. Place a round in the floured dough press. Place three tablespoons of the filling on the round. Close the dough press firmly to seal the edges of the pastry. Continue with the rest of the rounds and filling.
2. Place the completed piroshki on a greased baking sheet. Poke a few holes in the piroshki with the tines of a fork to vent the piroshki. Brush with a beaten egg.
3. Bake for 20 minutes or until they are golden brown.

Baker's note: You can make piroshki without a dough press—a dough press just makes it easier. Place your filling on one-half of the round, fold the other half over until the edges meet, and press the edges together with the tines of a fork. Press firmly to make sure that you have a good seal.

Mushroom Piroshki

This is a classic piroshki recipe. You make these in three steps: make the dough, cook the filling, and then assemble the piroshki. It's easiest to do with a dough press but you can build it manually. If so, be sure to seal the edges well with the tines of a fork.

For the dough

Ingredients

3 1/2 cups flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon granulated sugar
1/2 cup cold butter
2 large eggs
1 cup sour cream



Directions

1. Sift the flour, baking powder, salt, and sugar into a bowl. Cut the butter into 1/2-inch cubes and add it to the flour. Cut the butter into the flour with a pastry knife until it is the consistency of oatmeal.
2. In another bowl, whisk the eggs and sour cream together until it is smooth.
3. Add the egg mixture to the flour mixture and stir into a mass. Remove the dough ball to a floured counter and knead for a few minutes to make a smooth dough. Cover the dough ball and chill it in the refrigerator for an hour.

For the filling

Ingredients

1/4 cup butter
3/4 pound mushrooms
6 scallions, finely chopped
1 tablespoon flour
3 tablespoons sour cream
1/2 cup water
2 hard-boiled eggs, chopped
3 tablespoons fresh dill, chopped
salt
black pepper

1 egg, lightly beaten, for glazing

Directions

1. Melt the butter in a skillet. Add the mushrooms and scallions and sauté for ten minutes.
2. Sprinkle flour over the mushroom mixture and continue cooking for one more minute to gelatinize the flour.
3. Add the sour cream, stir to blend, and then remove from the heat. Add the water to create an in-the-pan sauce. Add the chopped eggs, dill, and salt and pepper to taste. Set aside.

To assemble and bake the piroshki

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

1. Divide the dough in half and return one half to the refrigerator to keep it cold. Roll the dough out on a floured counter to a thickness of 1/4-inch. Cut the dough into twelve 6-inch rounds. Place a round in the floured dough press. Place three tablespoons of the filling on the round. Close the dough press firmly to seal the edges of the pastry. Continue with the rest of the rounds and filling.
2. Place the completed piroshki on a greased baking sheet. Poke a few holes in the piroshki with the tines of a fork to vent the piroshki. Brush with a beaten egg.
3. Bake for 20 minutes or until they are golden brown.

Baker's note: You can make piroshki without a dough press—a dough press just makes it easier. Place your filling on one-half of the round, fold the other half over until the edges meet, and press the edges together with the tines of a fork. Press firmly to make sure that you have a good seal.

Potato Leek Piroshki

You make these piroshki in three steps: make the dough, cook the filling, and then assemble the piroshki. It's easiest to do with a dough press but you can build it manually. If so, be sure to seal the edges well with the tines of a fork.

For the dough

Ingredients

3 1/2 cups flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon granulated sugar
1/2 cup cold butter
2 large eggs
1 cup sour cream



Directions

1. Sift the flour, baking powder, salt, and sugar into a bowl. Cut the butter into 1/2-inch cubes and add it to the flour. Cut the butter into the flour with a pastry knife until it is the consistency of oatmeal.
2. In another bowl, whisk the eggs and sour cream together until it is smooth.
3. Add the egg mixture to the flour mixture and stir into a mass. Remove the dough ball to a floured counter and knead for a few minutes to make a smooth dough. Cover the dough ball and chill it in the refrigerator for an hour.

For the filling

Ingredients

4 new red potatoes the size of a baseball, peeled and diced in 1 inch pieces
2 leeks cleaned and cut in small pieces
2 tablespoons butter
3 tablespoons chicken broth or water
3 medium carrots, peeled and grated
1/2 teaspoon dried basil
1 1/2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
3/4 cup milk
Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

1. Cook the potatoes in water until they are not quite tender. Drain them and set aside.

2. In a medium saucepan, melt the butter. Add the leeks and cook for two minutes. Add the broth or water and grated carrots and continue to simmer for a few more minutes. Cook just until vegetables are tender-crisp. Add the cooked potatoes to the saucepan. Add the basil.
3. Place the flour in a small bowl. Add a little of the milk and mix to make a paste. Gradually stir in the rest of the milk and stir until smooth. Add the milk mixture to the saucepan and cook until the sauce has thickened and is bubbly. Remove the pan from the stove. Salt and pepper to taste.

To assemble and bake the piroshki

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

1. Divide the dough in half and return one half to the refrigerator to keep it cold. Roll the dough out on a floured counter to a thickness of 1/4-inch. Cut the dough into twelve 6-inch rounds. Place a round in the floured dough press. Place three tablespoons of the filling on the round. Close the dough press firmly to seal the edges of the pastry. Continue with the rest of the rounds and filling.
2. Place the completed piroshki on a greased baking sheet. Poke a few holes in the piroshki with the tines of a fork to vent the piroshki. Brush with a beaten egg.
3. Bake for 20 minutes or until they are golden brown.

Baker's note: You can make piroshki without a dough press—a dough press just makes it easier. Place your filling on one-half of the round, fold the other half over until the edges meet, and press the edges together with the tines of a fork. Press firmly to make sure that you have a good seal.

Turkey and Cheese Piroshki

This is a classic piroshki recipe. You make these in three steps: make the dough, cook the filling, and then assemble the piroshki. It's easiest to do with a dough press but you can build it manually. If so, be sure to seal the edges well with the tines of a fork.

For the dough

Ingredients

3 1/2 cups flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon granulated sugar
1/2 cup cold butter
2 large eggs
1 cup sour cream

Directions

1. Sift the flour, baking powder, salt, and sugar into a bowl. Cut the butter into 1/2-inch cubes and add it to the flour. Cut the butter into the flour with a pastry knife until it is the consistency of oatmeal.
2. In another bowl, whisk the eggs and sour cream together until it is smooth.
3. Add the egg mixture to the flour mixture and stir into a mass. Remove the dough ball to a floured counter and knead for a few minutes to make a smooth dough. Cover the dough ball and chill it in the refrigerator for an hour.



For the filling

Ingredients

1 lb ground turkey
1/2 cup diced onion
2 tablespoon butter
3/4 cup water
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
2 tablespoons flour
3 tablespoons fresh parsley or 1 tablespoon dried
1 cup grated cheese

Directions

1. Melt butter in skillet. Brown ground turkey in butter, then add diced onion and cook until onion is tender.

2. Sprinkle on flour, garlic powder, salt and pepper.
3. Stir in water and parsley, cook for a minute until thickened. Set aside.

To assemble and bake the piroshki

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

1. Divide the dough in half and return one half to the refrigerator to keep it cold. Roll the dough out on a floured counter to a thickness of 1/4-inch. Cut the dough into twelve 6-inch rounds. Place a round in the floured dough press. Place three tablespoons of the filling on the round and sprinkle with cheese. Close the dough press firmly to seal the edges of the pastry. Continue with the rest of the rounds and filling.
2. Place the completed piroshki on a greased baking sheet. Poke a few holes in the piroshki with the tines of a fork to vent the piroshki. Brush with a beaten egg.
3. Bake for 20 minutes or until they are golden brown.

Baker's note: You can make piroshki without a dough press—a dough press just makes it easier. Place your filling on one-half of the round, fold the other half over until the edges meet, and press the edges together with the tines of a fork. Press firmly to make sure that you have a good seal.

Ham and Cheese Piroshki

This is a classic piroshki recipe. You make these in three steps: make the dough, cook the filling, and then assemble the piroshki. It's easiest to do with a dough press but you can build it manually. If so, be sure to seal the edges well with the tines of a fork.



For the dough

Ingredients

- 3 1/2 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup cold butter
- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup sour cream

Directions

1. Sift the flour, baking powder, salt, and sugar into a bowl. Cut the butter into 1/2-inch cubes and add it to the flour. Cut the butter into the flour with a pastry knife until it is the consistency of oatmeal.
2. In another bowl, whisk the eggs and sour cream together until it is smooth.
3. Add the egg mixture to the flour mixture and stir into a mass. Remove the dough ball to a floured counter and knead for a few minutes to make a smooth dough. Cover the dough ball and chill it in the refrigerator for an hour.

For the filling

Ingredients

1 1/2 cups cubed ham, 1 inch pieces
1 1/2 cups cubed cheddar cheese
6 teaspoons mustard

To assemble and bake the piroshki

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

1. Divide the dough in half and return one half to the refrigerator to keep it cold. Roll the dough out on a floured counter to a thickness of 1/4-inch. Cut the dough into twelve 6-inch rounds. Place a round in the floured dough press.
2. Spread 1/2 teaspoon mustard onto each piroshki round.
3. Place 2 tablespoons of ham and 2 tablespoons of cheese onto a piroshki round.
4. With a pastry brush, spread water on the edges of the round to help seal it. Close the dough press firmly to seal the edges of the pastry. Continue with the rest of the rounds and filling. Place the piroshki on a lightly greased baking sheet.
5. Poke a few holes in the piroshki with the tines of a fork to vent the piroshki. Brush with beaten egg. Bake at 375 degrees for 12 to 15 minutes.

Baker's note: You can make piroshki without a dough press—a dough press just makes it easier. Place your filling on one-half of the round, fold the other half over until the edges meet, and press the edges together with the tines of a fork. Press firmly to make sure that you have a good seal.

Italian Meatball Piroshki

This recipe makes piroshki that are very much like calzones. They are very good.

Because this requires making three items--a crust, meatballs, and a sauce--we looked for a shortcut. We wanted a bread-type crust--one made with yeast--though a baking powder crust would have been good and takes less time. So to cut down the time, we used a pizza crust mix. The pizza crust mix makes a softer, more workable dough than does a bread mix. The results were outstanding.

Of course you can use other recipes in this guide for the crust.

For the meatballs:

1 pound lean ground beef
1 cup dry bread crumbs
2/3 cup milk
1 egg
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 onions, finely chopped
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon dried parsley
1/8 teaspoon black pepper
2 tablespoons olive oil

1. In a large bowl, mix the ground beef and bread crumbs together. Set aside.
2. In a small bowl, whisk the egg with the milk until smooth. Add spices and stir. Empty this egg mixture into the meat mixture bowl and gently knead together.
3. Form meatballs a little larger than a marble.
4. Place the olive oil in a large frying pan with a lid. Sauté the meatballs in hot oil to brown them. Add the sauce (recipe follows) and continue cooking for 20 minutes over low heat or until the meatballs are cooked through and tender.

For the sauce:

1 15-ounce can tomato sauce
1 6-ounce can tomato paste
2 cups water
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon dried parsley
1/2 teaspoon dried basil leaves
1/4 teaspoon dried sage
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper

Mix the ingredients together in a bowl and add to the meatballs in the frying pan.

To assemble the piroshki, you will need 1 1/2 cups grated mozzarella cheese.

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

1. Make the dough according to package or recipe instructions.
2. Roll the dough out on a floured counter to a thickness of 1/4-inch. Cut the dough into twelve 6-inch rounds. Place a round in the floured dough press. Place two tablespoons of sauce and three or four small meatballs on the round and sprinkle with two tablespoons of grated cheese. Close the dough press firmly to seal the edges of the pastry. Continue with the rest of the rounds and filling.
3. Place the completed piroshki on a greased baking sheet. Poke a few holes in the piroshki with the tines of a fork to vent the piroshki. Brush with a beaten egg.
4. Bake for 20 minutes or until they are golden brown.

Chicken and Ranch Piroshki

This is a very good piroshki. It is best served fresh. For some reason, the leftovers seemed a bit dry the next day.

You make these in three steps: make the dough, cook the filling, and then assemble the piroshki. It's easiest to do with a dough press but you can build it manually. If so, be sure to seal the edges well with the tines of a fork.

For the dough

3 1/2 cups flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon granulated sugar
1/2 cup cold butter
2 large eggs
1 cup sour cream

1. Sift the flour, baking powder, salt, and sugar into a bowl. Cut the butter into 1/2-inch cubes and add it to the flour. Cut the butter into the flour with a pastry knife until it is the consistency of oatmeal.
2. In another bowl, whisk the eggs and sour cream together until it is smooth.
3. Add the egg mixture to the flour mixture and stir into a mass. Remove the dough ball to a floured counter and knead for a few minutes to make a smooth dough. Cover the dough ball and chill it in the refrigerator for an hour.

For the filling

1 large onion, finely chopped
2 stalks celery, diced
2 tablespoons butter
1 tablespoon flour
4 cups cooked chicken meat, shredded or chopped finely
2/3 cup ranch dressing
1/3 tablespoons sour cream
1/2 teaspoon thyme
3 tablespoons fresh dill, chopped
salt
black pepper
1 egg, lightly beaten, for glazing

1. Sauté the onion and celery in the butter until not yet tender and still a bit crisp. Sprinkle the flour over the vegetables, stir until the flour is absorbed in the butter, and remove from the heat.
2. Add the cooked chicken, ranch dressing, sour cream, thyme, dill, and salt and pepper to taste. Stir until combined.

To assemble and bake the piroshki

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

1. Divide the dough in half and return one half to the refrigerator to keep it cold. Roll the dough out on a floured counter to a thickness of 1/4-inch. Cut the dough into twelve 6-inch rounds. Place a round in the floured dough press. Place three tablespoons of the filling on the round. Close the dough press firmly to seal the edges of the pastry. Continue with the rest of the rounds and filling.
2. Place the completed piroshki on a greased baking sheet. Poke a few holes in the piroshki with the tines of a fork to vent the piroshki. Brush with the beaten egg.
3. Bake for 20 minutes or until they are golden brown.

Baker's note: You can make piroshki without a dough press—a dough press just makes it easier. Place your filling on one-half of the round, fold the other half over until the edges meet, and press the edges together with the tines of a fork. Press firmly to make sure that you have a good seal.

Calzones, the Italian Pockets

Calzones are closely related to pizzas, sort of a folded over pizza. Somehow though, cutting into the crisp, golden crust of a calzone to reveal a luscious filling is a different experience than eating a pizza. But if you can make a pizza, you can make a calzone. In this article, we'll tell you how and give you a recipe.



You can use nearly any pizza crust recipe to make calzones. The fillings are usually different than the toppings on a pizza; use ricotta instead of hard cheese for the filling base. (Although you can make calzones without any cheese in the filling.)

Keep the following principles in mind as you build your calzones:

1. For the filling, simple combinations really do work best. Less is truly better.
2. Calzones take longer to cook than pizza and require a lower temperature in order to crisp the crust and to penetrate the filling. They generally take 15 to 20 minutes to bake at 400 degrees.
3. Smaller is better. Make calzones that are 6 to 12 inches long.

Most calzones are made in the traditional half-moon shape that is achieved by rolling or pressing out the dough ball into a circle. The filling is mounded into the bottom half of the circle and the top part is folded over and crimped by hand or with a fork.

Here are the steps to making a perfect calzone:

1. Mix the dough according to the package or recipe instructions. Cover and let the dough rise until doubled.
2. Roll out a small dough ball (about 8 ounces) into a round 1/4 inch thick. The gluten in the dough may try to make the dough spring back into shape. It's often easier to roll the dough partially, let it sit for a few minutes to relax, and then roll the dough again. Try to roll the dough uniformly. Thin spots lead to leaks.
3. Place a small handful of mozzarella on the lower half of the circle. On top of the cheese, place about three quarters of a cup of filling materials. On top of the filling, add 1/2 to 2/3 cup ricotta. Thick, creamy ricotta—not low-fat—works best. Season with salt and pepper and sprinkle with parmesan. (Of course, you can vary the



filling ingredients greatly. Often an egg is mixed with the ricotta to make the filling less runny.)

4. Fold the top of the calzone crust over the bottom into the traditional half-moon shape. Seal the edges by crimping them with a fork. Be sure to press firmly enough to seal the edges and keep the fillings from leaking. Use the edge of a knife or fork to shape the crust edge into a uniform border.
5. Just before baking, brush the crust with an egg white wash or olive oil. An egg white wash will give the calzones a satiny finish. Olive oil will make the crust browner and crisper. If you brush with olive oil before baking, brush the crust again with olive oil immediately after coming from the oven. The second brushing will add sheen and flavor to the crust.
6. Bake the calzones on a dark pan on the lowest shelf of the oven to provide enough bottom heat to bake the bottom crust. Better yet, place the pan directly on a preheated baking stone. (If you are using a rectangular pan, a rectangular baking stone works best.)

Creamy Ricotta and Sausage Calzone Recipe

Use this recipe as a template for other calzones. Try other calzones with mushrooms, pepperoni, spinach, or more. If you use onions or green peppers, partially cook the veggies before adding them to the filling. Meats should always be cooked first.



For the crust

2 2/3 cups bread flour
1 cup water at 110 degrees
1 7 gram packet instant yeast
1/4 cup stone ground whole wheat or rye flour
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 teaspoons granulated sugar
1/2 teaspoons salt
1 tablespoon [baker's dry milk](#) or other non-fat dry milk
1/2 teaspoon dough conditioner (optional)

olive oil

For the filling

3/4 pound mild Italian sausage
1 small onion, diced
1/4 cup chopped fresh basil or 1 tablespoon dried

1 1/4 to 1 1/2 cups grated mozzarella cheese
1 1/2 to 2 cups whole milk ricotta
2 tablespoons grated parmesan cheese
salt and pepper (optional)

Directions for the crust

1. Place about 2/3's of the bread flour in the bowl of your stand-type mixer. Add the water and yeast. Mix with the dough hook for about one minute to hydrate the instant yeast.
2. Add the rest of the bread flour, the whole grain flour, olive oil, the sugar, salt, dry milk, and dough conditioner. Mix for about four minutes at medium speed or until the gluten is formed.
3. Remove the dough to a large greased bowl. Cover and let the dough rise until doubled.

For the filling

Sauté the sausage and onion together until cooked but not over-cooked. (The meat will cook just a bit more in the heat of the oven.) Stir in the basil. Crumble the meat into smaller pieces.

Putting the calzone together

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.

1. Once the dough has risen, divide it into three equal parts with a sharp knife. Roll out each into a nine-inch round. Avoid any thin spots that might leak.
2. Place 1/3 of the mozzarella on the lower half of each circle. On top of the cheese, place 1/3 of the meat and onion filling. On top of the filling, add 1/3 of the ricotta. Sprinkle each with a portion of the parmesan. Salt and pepper if desired.
3. Fold the top of the calzone crust over the bottom into the traditional half-moon shape. Seal the edges by crimping them with a fork. Use a sharp knife or pizza wheel to trim the crimped edges smoothly.
4. Grease a large baking sheet and dust it with cornmeal or semolina flour. With a pastry brush, brush the crust of each of the calzones with olive oil. Bake the calzones for 15 to 20 minutes or until browned. Remove from the oven and turn to a wire rack. Brush the crust again with olive oil. Serve hot.

Baker's Notes: In filling the calzones, you don't need to measure the ingredients; just use what looks right. Unless your sausage is well-seasoned, you will probably want to sprinkle the fillings with salt and pepper.

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